In the claims:

1. (currently amended) Apparatus in an enclosure comprising :

a plurality of serial bus controllers in a processor;

a serial bus coupled to the plurality of serial bus controllers, the serial bus for transferring ~~collecting~~ environmental and status information associated with one or more devices included in the enclosure to the processor;

an arbitration mechanism for controlling access to the serial bus by the plurality of serial bus controllers, the arbitration mechanism comprising redundant control lines, wherein each of serial bus controllers includes a circuit for monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the serial bus is in use and wherein each of the serial bus controllers is assigned a different number n of a period td for driving the control signals after a delay t1 when seeking to take control of the serial bus.

2. (cancelled) .

3. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the arbitration mechanism further comprises:

a circuit in each of the serial bus controllers for driving the control lines for a predetermined period of time equal to t1+n*td if the serial bus is not in use, and for then releasing the control lines and monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the control lines are being driven by another controller.

4. (currently amended) A method of managing collection of status information in an enclosure comprising the steps of:

providing a serial bus coupled to a plurality of serial bus controllers, the serial bus for propagating environmental and status information between one or more devices in the enclosure , wherein each of the serial bus controllers is coupled to the serial bus by one of a plurality of redundant control lines ;

arbitrating for access to the serial bus by the plurality of serial bus controllers by allocating a different number n of a period td to each one of the serial bus controllers of the plurality, wherein each of the serial bus controllers drives their associated control line by their for a time period equal to n*td to gain control of the serial bus.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the serial bus is in use.

6. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

driving the control lines for a predetermined period of time if the serial bus is not in use, and then releasing the control lines and monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the control lines are being driven by another controller.

7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

taking control of the serial bus if it is ascertained that the control lines are not being driven by another controller.